

Council on Postsecondary Education
Committee on Equal Opportunities
October 15, 2001

Improvements at Kentucky State University
To Implement the Partnership Agreement With The U.S.
Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

Action: The staff recommends that the committee recommend to the Council on Postsecondary Education that a comprehensive assessment of the KSU academic programs be completed and that the results of that study advise the council on programmatic improvements at KSU.

In May of 1999, the Commonwealth and the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, entered into a partnership for the purpose of improving the educational opportunities for African Americans in Kentucky's public postsecondary education institutions. Part III of the agreement sets forth the commitments that will bring Kentucky into full compliance with Title VI and the Fordice standards. The duration of the agreement is through December 31, 2002. The agreement may be extended, as necessary, for completion of certain items committed to in the agreement.

The OCR acknowledged the substantial efforts and accomplishments of Kentucky under its voluntary desegregation plans in support of meeting its obligations under Title VI and Fordice. The OCR further acknowledged that information provided by Kentucky demonstrates that numerous enhancement initiatives were implemented as a result of the initial desegregation plan and have continued since that time.

Under the partnership agreement, the Commonwealth specifically committed to revitalize the facilities (renovation of Carver Hall, Hathaway Hall, and Young Hall) and academic programs of Kentucky State University by making appropriate legislative requests. The commitments to renovate facilities were addressed by the 2000 session of the legislature, with the exception of renovation of the Young Hall dormitory. The 2002 General Assembly will be asked to authorize agency bond authority to allow the university to complete the renovation of the Young Hall dormitory.

It is unclear what improvements are needed for KSU's academic programs. A comprehensive assessment of the university by expert higher education planners is needed. An assessment would identify specific improvements needed to attain its mission to deliver a liberal studies curriculum, serve local students, and serve state government employees. The assessment also would determine the adequacy of the funding provided to the university and recommend changes to the way funds are allocated by the administration. Finally, the assessment would state clearly the role of the university in the postsecondary education reform effort that began in 1997.

KSU Mission: The state's unique, small, liberal studies institution with the lowest student-faculty ratio in the state system. The university shall serve as a residential institution with a range of traditional collegiate programs appropriate to its unique role.

Geographic Region: The geographic region shall be statewide for its liberal studies mission, its land grant functions, and its service to state government. In addition, KSU's primary service area for commuting students shall be for Franklin and contiguous counties.

Degree Levels: Selected associate degree and baccalaureate degree programs shall be oriented toward liberal studies and selected career opportunities related to state government services. KSU shall offer selected master's degree programs based on demonstrated need, with priority given to a public administration curriculum to meet the needs of state government.

The council and KSU would use the results of the assessment as the basis to identify programmatic improvements to assist the university to achieve its mission and to assist with the implementation of *The Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997*.

Staff preparation by Sherron Jackson